

# Emma Eames

the  
complete  
Victor  
recordings  
(1905~11)







# CD I (78:26)

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|----|---|------|
| 1  | Still wie die Nacht (Bohm) <i>Ger.</i><br>20 ii 1905; C 2315-I (Victor 85052)                                     | 3:03 |
| 2  | FAUST: Ah! Je ris de me voir si belle 'Air des bijoux' (Gounod) <i>Fr.</i><br>20 ii 1905; C 2317-I (Victor 85053) | 3:01 |
| 3  | Ave Maria 'Meditation on J.S.Bach's Prelude in C' (Gounod) <i>Lat.</i><br>20 ii 1905; C 2318-I (Victor 85054)     | 2:44 |
| 4  | L'incrédule (Hahn) <i>Fr.</i>   | 2:14 |
| 5  | The Year's at the Spring (Beach) <i>Eng.</i><br>16 iii 1905; C 2314-2 (Victor 85057)                              | :54  |
| 6  | Goodbye (Tosti) <i>Eng.</i><br>16 iii 1905; C 2400-I (Victor 85058)   | 4:09 |
| 7  | TOSCA: Vissi d'arte (Puccini) <i>It.</i><br>16 iii 1905; C 2401-I (Victor 85059)                                  | 3:05 |
| 8  | Élégie (Massenet) <i>Fr.</i><br>with violin solo<br>16 iii 1905; C 2402-I (Victor 85063)                          | 3:29 |
| 9  | Who is Sylvia? (Schubert) <i>Eng.</i><br>28 iii 1905; C 2316-2 (Victor 85062)                                     | 3:36 |
| 10 | ROMÉO ET JULIETTE: Je veux vivre dans ce rêve 'Valse' (Gounod) <i>Fr.</i><br>28 iii 1905; C 2419-I (Victor 85060) | 3:20 |
| 11 | The Star-Spangled Banner (Arnold) <i>Eng.</i>   | 2:09 |
| 12 | Dixie (Emmett) <i>Eng.</i><br>28 iii 1905; C 2421-2 (Victor 85061)  | :45  |



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| 13 | <b>Chanson d'amour</b> (Hollman) <i>Fr.</i><br>with Josef Hollman, <i>cello</i><br>I ii 1906; C 3074-I (Victor 85097)   | 3:32 |
| 14 | <b>Élégie</b> (Massenet) <i>Fr.</i><br>with Josef Hollman, <i>cello</i><br>I ii 1906; C 3075-I (Victor 88014)   | 3:31 |
| 15 | <b>Ave Maria</b> 'Meditation on J.S.Bach's Prelude in C' (Gounod) <i>Lat.</i><br>with Josef Hollman, <i>cello</i><br>I ii 1906; C 3076-I (Victor 85098)                   | 2:47 |
| 16 | <b>DON GIOVANNI: Là ci darem la mano</b> (Mozart) <i>It.</i><br>with Emilio de Gogorza, <i>baritone</i><br>9 iii 1906; C 3170-2 (Victor 89005)                            | 3:12 |
| 17 | <b>IL FALUTO MAGICO [ZAUBERFLÖTE]: La dove prende [Bei Männern]</b> (Mozart) <i>It.</i><br>with Emilio de Gogorza, <i>baritone</i><br>9 iii 1906; C 3171-3 (Victor 89003) | 3:31 |
| 18 | <b>Crucifix</b> (Faure) <i>Fr.</i><br>with Emilio de Gogorza, <i>baritone</i><br>9 iii 1906; C 3172-2 (Victor 89004)  | 3:23 |
| 19 | <b>OTELLO: Ave Maria</b> (Verdi) <i>It.</i><br>I4 v 1906; C 3385-2 (Victor 88035)   | 3:34 |
| 20 | <b>CARMEN: Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante</b> 'Micaela's air' (Bizet) <i>Fr.</i><br>I4 v 1906; C 3386-I (Victor 88036)  | 4:12 |
| 21 | <b>CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA: Voi lo sapete</b> (Mascagni) <i>It.</i><br>I4 v 1906; C 3388-2 (Victor 88037)  | 3:16 |
| 22 | <b>ROMÉO ET JULIETTE: Je veux vivre dans ce rêve</b> 'Valse' (Gounod) <i>Fr.</i><br>I3 xi 1906; C 4032-I (Victor 88011)   | 3:16 |

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| 23 | CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA: <i>Voi lo sapete</i> (Mascagni) <i>It.</i><br>16 xi 1906; C 4034-2 (Victor 88037)                  | 3:08 |
| 24 | FAUST: <i>Ah! Je ris de me voir si belle 'Air des bijoux'</i> (Gounod) <i>Fr.</i><br>16 xi 1906; C 4049-I (Victor 88006) | 3:07 |
| 25 | FAUST: <i>Il était un roi de Thulé</i> (Gounod) <i>Fr.</i><br>27 xi 1906; C 4066-I (Victor 88045)                        | 3:36 |

## CD 2 (73:39)

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| 1 | OTELLO: <i>Ave Maria</i> (Verdi) <i>It.</i><br>27 xi 1906; C 3385-4 (Victor 88035)   | 3:31 |
| 2 | Still wie die Nacht (Bohm) <i>Ger.</i><br>27 xi 1906; C 4067-I (Victor 88005)  | 3:07 |
| 3 | FAUST: <i>Alerte! Alerte! Ou vous êtes perdus!</i> (Gounod) <i>Fr.</i><br>with Charles Dalmores, <i>tenor</i> , and Pol Plançon, <i>bass</i><br>25 iii 1907; C 4332-I (Victor 95300) | 2:48 |
| 4 | DON GIOVANNI: <i>Là ci darem la mano</i> (Mozart) <i>It.</i><br>with Emilio de Gogorza, <i>baritone</i><br>22 v 1907; C 4263-I (Victor 89005)  | 3:09 |
| 5 | Crucifix (Faure) <i>Fr.</i><br>with Emilio de Gogorza, <i>baritone</i><br>22 v 1907; C 3172-3 (Victor 89004)   | 3:21 |
| 6 | LA NOZZE DI FIGARO: <i>Sull'aria! Che soave zeffiretto</i> (Mozart) <i>It.</i><br>with Marcella Sembrich, <i>soprano</i><br>25 i 1908; C 5040-3 (Victor 95202)                       | 2:58 |
| 7 | TOSCA: <i>Vissi d'arte</i> (Puccini) <i>It.</i><br>25 i 1908; C 4033-5 (Victor 88010)  | 3:01 |

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| 8  | Love in May (Parker) <i>Eng.</i>   | 1:26 |
| 9  | I Once had a Sweet Little Doll (Nevin) <i>Eng.</i><br>18 v 1908; C 6201-I (Victor 88131)   | 2:17 |
| 10 | Si tu le veux (Koechlin) <i>Fr.</i>  | 1:35 |
| 11 | CHÉRUBIN: Viva amour 'Aubade' (Massenet) <i>Fr.</i><br>18 v 1908; C 6202-I (Victor 88135)  | 1:35 |
| 12 | Spring (Henschel) <i>Eng.</i>  | 3:15 |
| 13 | The Year's at the Spring (Beach) <i>Eng.</i><br>18 v 1908; C 6203-I (Victor 88008)   | :50  |
| 14 | Chanson de baisers (Bemberg) <i>Fr.</i><br>19 v 1908; C 6206-I (Victor 88133)  | 3:47 |
| 15 | LAKMÉ: Viens, Mallika...Dôme épais le jasmin (Delibes) <i>Fr.</i><br>with Louise Homer, <i>mezzo-soprano</i><br>25 v 1908; C 6225-2 (Victor 89020)                   | 4:08 |
| 16 | LOHENGRIN: Du Ärmste kannst wohl (Wagner) <i>Ger.</i><br>with Louise Homer, <i>mezzo soprano</i><br>25 v 1908; C 6226-I (Victor 89021)                               | 3:46 |
| 17 | LA NOZZE DI FIGARO: Crudel, perchè finora (Mozart) <i>It.</i><br>with Emilio de Gogorza, <i>baritone</i><br>6 iv 1909; C 6967-I (Victor 89023)                       | 2:53 |
| 18 | Crucifix (Faure) <i>Fr.</i><br>with Emilio de Gogorza, <i>baritone</i><br>6 iv 1909; C 3172-4 (Victor 89004)   | 2:50 |
| 19 | IL TROVATORE: Mira d'acerbe lagrime...Vivra! Contende il giubilo (Verdi) <i>It.</i><br>with Emilio de Gogorza, <i>baritone</i><br>7 iv 1909; C 6233-5 (Victor 89022) | 3:36 |

- 20 **Dopo (Tosti) *It.*** 3:57  
27 xi 1911; C 11307-1 (Victor 88344)
- 21 **VÉRONIQUE: You are laughing, now tell me why 'The Swing Song' (Messenger) *Eng.*** 4:34  
with Emilio de Gogorza, *baritone*  
27 xi 1911; C 11309-1 (Victor 89063)
- 22 **Gretchen am Spinnrade (Schubert) *Ger.*** 3:56  
with Henri Gilles, *piano*  
28 xi 1911; C 11312-2 (Victor 88367)
- 23 28 **Emma Eames comments on her records** 5:41  
2 ii 1939; radio broadcast (IRCC 3142)

CD 1: tracks 1 - 15 with piano; tracks 16 - 25 with orchestra

CD 2: tracks 1 - 7 & 15 - 21 with orchestra; tracks 8 - 14 & 22 with piano

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ROMOPHONE would like to thank Gregor Benko, Lawrence Holdridge, Jeffrey Miller and Don Morrison for their kind help and assistance in the production of this CD release.



With no previous experience on stage 23-year-old Emma Eames from Bath, Maine, made her début on 13 March 1889 at the Paris Opéra as Juliette to Jean de Reszke's Roméo and became an overnight sensation. She later wrote, 'It was a curious experience to go to the Opéra as a nobody, and to find oneself the next day the talk of two continents.' Gounod himself had chosen Eames and trained her in the part. A review of her Juliette at Covent Garden two years later vividly describes Eames 'singing splendidly throughout and looking the most beautiful and youthful exponent of Shakespeare's heroine ever seen on the operatic stage'. Photographs of the period support these descriptions of Eames's great beauty.

Eames's début came only three months after Gounod had conducted the historic revival of *Roméo et Juliette* on 28 November 1888 with Adelina Patti singing her first performance at the Paris Opéra and de Reszke singing his first Roméo. These performances

were the only time the two stars had ever sung together. Patti had been Eames's idol ever since as a teenager she had seen her perform in Boston. Her fond memories later moved her to comment: 'I cannot imagine more beautiful sounds than issued from that exquisite

throat...The theory of perfect singing was Patti's, the minimum of effort for the maximum of effect.' Eames sang Juliette an average of ten times a month that first season in Paris. Although the facts reveal more of a struggle leading to that spectacular night Eames's achievement was phenomenal, and her success was sustained for more than two decades.

Eames was born in Shanghai of American parents on 13 August 1865. Her father was a lawyer and her mother an amateur musician and singer. They returned to the United States when Emma was five, and settled in Portland, Maine. When she was eleven, due to the family's economic difficulties, Emma was sent to live with her grandparents in Bath. Her



*Eames as Juliette*



mother became aware of Emma's remarkable singing voice, and began to teach her seriously when she was about fifteen. These weekly trips from Bath to Portland continued until 1882 when Emma was sent to Boston to study with Clara Munger (a student of the Italian baritone Enrico delle Sedie in Paris). While in Boston Emma appeared as a soloist with the Boston Symphony under Wilhelm Gericke. The conductor advised Eames to continue her studies in Paris with Mathilde Marchesi, and with the financial help of a sponsor Eames went to Paris with her mother in 1886 to begin training with the legendary vocal teacher. Marchesi's approach reflected the older Italian *bel canto* tradition which she had inherited from Manuel Garcia, the teacher of Jenny Lind. Marchesi's other students at this time included Nellie Melba and Emma Calvé.

Eames experienced several disappointments before making her début at the Paris Opéra. She was originally engaged to

make her début at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels in 1887, but it was cancelled without reason. Eames believed Nellie Melba was behind it, and this event caused an irreconcilable rift between the two singers. (In later years Eames blamed several other of her misfortunes on her Australian rival whom she referred to as 'my enemy'.) The following year Eames was signed to a contract by the Opéra Comique, but after preparing for rôles in *La Traviata*, *Mignon* and *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* she was still not given an opportunity to appear publicly. In this case another political intrigue involving Massenet and his protégé Sybil Sanderson was suspected.



*Eames as Aïda*

Eames had planned to make a tour of Russia when she was contacted suddenly by the Paris Opéra where she had auditioned earlier. The Paris Opéra offered her a two-year contract, and Eames accepted it despite being legally bound to the Opéra Comique. Fortunately Eames was able to break her obligations to the Opéra

Comique and the rest is history. Despite never having served an apprenticeship Eames began her career in one of the world's greatest opera houses singing opposite the legends of her time. Eames sang for two seasons at the Paris Opéra, adding standard rôles to her repertoire, and creating Columbe in Saint-Saëns's *Ascanio* and the title rôle in *Zaire* by de la Nux in 1890.

After her appointment with the Paris Opéra Eames made a brilliant London début at Covent Garden on 7 April 1891 as Marguerite in Gounod's *Faust*. She was to sing a total of seven seasons in London, and scored her greatest triumph as Aïda in 1901. She created the rôles of Ero in *Ero e Leandro* by Mancinelli, Yasodara in *Light of Asia* by de Lara as well as the title rôle of *Lady of Longford* by L. E. Bach, and was awarded the Jubilee Medal by Queen Victoria in 1896. During this period Eames also sang at the Teatro Réal in Madrid and in Monte Carlo where she created *Ghisèle* by César Franck and performed with Tamagno in

Verdi's *Otello*.

Eames spent the major part of her career with the Metropolitan Opera in New York beginning on 14 December 1891 as Juliette with Jean de Reszke, her Roméo. They had made their American début earlier with the



*Eames as Marguerite*

same company in *Lohengrin* on tour in Chicago, but this New York appearance marked the beginning of a decade in which Eames and de Reszke were frequently paired as on-stage lovers. Eames's New York début was an emphatic success, and she immediately became a favourite of New York audiences.

Except for Santuzza which she sang in the Met premiere of *Cavalleria rusticana*, Eames's rôles during the 1891-92 season reflected her youth and lyricism. Eames's development as an artist can best be observed by following her career at the Met. Each year she added increasingly dramatic rôles to her repertoire. The dark velvety quality of her voice, especially in the middle and lower registers, had made



Marchesi and others suspect that the young Eames was potentially a dramatic soprano. Even the great Marietta Alboni had coached her as Norma, but Eames herself felt that her vocal means were more limited and proceeded cautiously. Eames took on the rôles of the Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Eva in *Die Meistersinger* and Charlotte in *Werther* in 1893-94; Desdemona, Donna Elvira and Mistress Ford in 1894-95; she focused extensively on Wagner by adding Elisabeth and Sieglinde in the late 1890s.

Although she spoke of singing Brünnhilde and Isolde, Eames later admitted that these rôles were not suited to her. Instead Eames moved in the direction of Italian opera, singing Aïda in 1900 and Tosca in 1902. She continued to sing the standard lyric repertoire, expanding it with the rôle of Pamina in the 1900 Met première of *The Magic Flute* and Amelia in Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera*. She later added Leonora in *Il Trovatore* and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, and sang the title

rôle in the first Met performance of Mascagni's *Iris* in 1907.

Eames's last appearance at the Met was as Tosca on 15 February 1909. She left following a disagreement with the Met's new director Gatti-Casazza, and made only two

more stage appearances as Desdemona and Tosca at the Boston Opera in 1911. After several concert tours Eames's career had ended. She was 46 years old and, as reviews and recordings testify, was still singing magnificently.

In the period justifiably described as 'the Golden Age of Opera' Emma Eames was a prima donna of major importance. Eames's rivals included Melba, Calvé, Nordica and

Destinn; her leading men besides de Reszke included Caruso, Tamagno, Maurel and Plançon.

Coming out of the Marchesi school Eames's voice had a pure, unforced beauty; it floated free of the throat, capable of all the runs, trills and accents of florid music. John



*Eames as Amelia*

Steane has written of her 'grandeur, a roundness that extends right to the high As and Bs where others thin out and become piercing, a flexibility and assurance probably finer than any lyric-dramatic soprano since her time'. As a Victorian soprano, coming out of the classical tradition, she rejected the impulsive, combustible naturalism of the newer Italian school. In contrast, Eames created a calm but tense atmosphere within which the drama is expressed poignantly but without exaggeration. Eames always remained a singer in search of an 'ideal'.

In 1904 she gave a benefit performance of *Tosca* for the artists of the Opéra Comique at La Salle Favart in Paris. Puccini and Sardou attended the performance. Puccini was said to have found her *Tosca* unique, possessing the deep note of Greek tragedy. The French Académie decorated her with the order of Les Palms Académiques.

Her records testify to her greatness. We hear an unusually beautiful voice, used

instrumentally as an even column of sound. The legato is smooth, often aided by an expressive portamento. In the lyric pieces there is a similarity to Melba, but Eames had a far more extensive tragic dimension. In comparing her with Melba, P. G. Hurst wrote, 'There was



*Eames as Tosca*

in her voice an added lusciousness, creamy and velvety in "timbre" - a touch of romance, which would be most affecting.' She entered into her rôles with a chameleon-like ability to change from a silvery lyricism to bronzed, dramatic tones of great richness. Her upper register reaches out spatially like the chimes of a great bell. Fluent with languages, she sings idiomatically in French, Italian and German.

Throughout one feels an artist of great culture, secure in the knowledge that she is part of a noble tradition.

Listening to multiple versions of the various arias, songs and duets one can hear Eames's attempt to perfect her interpretations. The duets with Marcella Sembrich and Louise



Homer give a clear sense of her musicianship, a willingness to blend her voice with others to create an ensemble. With Emilio de Gogorza, the voices were not as easily merged as the numerous takes reveal. A balance was difficult to achieve between the baritone's forward, bright, narrow sound and Eames's open-throated, spatial opulence. It has been a curiosity that during her last recording sessions on 27 & 28 November 1911, when she had reached such tragic depths in Tosti's *Dopo* and Schubert's *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, Eames chose to record

a duet from the operetta *Veronique* by Messager with de Gogorza. Perhaps this was an act of romance between these mature newlyweds. They had finally married that year after a highly publicised law suit, brought by his wife, which ended in a settlement and divorce. The music echoes the atmosphere of the Opéra

Comique. Declaring, 'I've never loved before today,' and singing of 'your eyes of blue - your voice that is so sweet to hear,' de Gogorza tenderly declares his love to Eames. We seem to share a private moment. Eames and de Gogorza did separate years later after living in



*Emilio de Gogorza and Emma Eames*

a grand manner in Paris during the 1920s and 1930s. After a long illness she died in New York on 13 June 1952 at the age of 86. Shortly before her death Eames was quoted as saying: 'I live in thoughts, I live in books, I live in ideals, but since the machine age I have

ceased to follow life.'

Long neglected, Emma Eames is one of the finest representatives of a tradition of beautiful singing we may never encounter again. With her the 'Golden Age' is again brought to life 'in the pure tones of a noble voice'.

## Emma Eames's spoken commentary on her career and recordings

On 2 February 1939, twenty-eight years after her retirement, Emma Eames was broadcast in an interview with Stephen Fassett on WQXR radio in New York. On this programme Eames recalled her illustrious career and selected several of her favourite recordings to be played over the air.

The radio broadcast was recorded and issued on a double-sided ten-inch record by the International Record Collector's Club, an American organization founded in the 1930s which made special issues of vocal recordings. The IRCC edited the programme to feature Emma Eames's spoken commentary without the musical examples.

Six track points have been inserted into Eames's commentary in order to allow the listener to programme the illustrative examples. To listen to Eames's commentary with her chosen examples at the appropriate junctures it is necessary to insert the following musical selections between tracks 23 and 28 of the commentary on CD 2 as follows:

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|----|---|
| 23 | < Je veux vivre dans ce rêve (Gounod): CD I <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">10</span>  |
| 24 | < Voi lo sapete (Mascagni): CD I <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">21</span> or <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">23</span>               |
| 25 | < Chanson d'amour (Hollman): CD I <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">13</span>  |
| 26 | < Ah! Je ris de me voir si belle (Gounod): CD I <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">2</span> or <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">24</span> |
| 27 | < Gretchen am Spinnrade (Schubert): CD 2 <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">22</span>   |
| 28 |   |



April 12<sup>th</sup> 1915



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